

AGENDA

Nebraska Environmental Trust
Grants Committee

Thursday, October 16, 2025

1:30 PM

2077 N Street, Suite 310

Lincoln, NE 68510

1. Call to Order
 - a. Roll call
 - b. Verify Quorum
 - c. Notice of Meeting; Published Thursday, October 9, 2025
 - d. Notification of Open Meetings Law Posting
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of September 25, 2025, Grants Committee Meeting Minutes
4. Determination of Eligibility of Applications for Grant Funding
5. Grant Portal Scoring Process Explanation
6. Next Meeting; December 11, 2025, NET Office, 1:30 PM
7. Adjourn

****This Agenda contains a list of subjects known at the time of its distribution on October 6, 2025. A Current copy is on file at the Nebraska Environmental Trust offices, 2077 N Street, Suite 310, Lincoln, NE 68510. Except for agenda items of an emergency nature, changes are not made later than 24 hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting. Completing the sign-in sheet available at the meeting may offer public comment on any agenda item. The time for each speaker should not exceed 3 minutes.**

MINUTES

Nebraska Environmental Trust
Grants Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 25, 2025
1:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order

Committee Chairman Coleman called the virtual, on-site meeting of the Grants Committee to order at 1:30 p.m. in Suite 310 at 2077 N St, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Advanced notice of the meeting was published in the Lincoln Journal Star on September 18, 2025. The agenda and documents to be considered at the meeting were provided. The Open Meetings Act was posted near the meeting room entrance and on the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) website.

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was present.

Members Present (4):

District I: Jeff Kanger, Lincoln

District II: Committee Chairman Garfield Coleman, Omaha

District III: Josh Andersen, Edgar; Rod Christen, Steinauer

Members Absent (2):

State Agency Representative: Jesse Bradley, Director, Nebraska Department of Water, Energy & Environment; Tim McCoy, Director, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

Staff Present:

Holly Adams, Executive Director; Madison Moe, Grants Assistant; Karen Plautz-Castro, Administrative Specialist

It should be noted that Board Chairman Quandahl is present, however, will not be actively participating in the meeting. McCoy joined the meeting at 1:31 pm.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Approval of December 5, 2024, Grants Committee meeting minutes

Motion by Kanger, seconded by Andersen, "I move to approve the December 5, 2024, Grants Committee meeting minutes."

Discussion: None.

Voting Aye: McCoy, Andersen, Christen, Kanger, Coleman

Absent: Bradley

5 Voted Aye. Motion carried.

4. Grant application process timeline

Executive Director Adams reviewed the Grants Committee timeline as follows:

- **September 25th** at 1:30 p.m. – Grants Committee Meeting – Information Session on Process – via Zoom <https://outdoornebraska.zoom.us/j/99402624219>
- **October 16th** at 1:30 p.m. – Grants Committee Meeting – Grant Eligibility Determinations & Recommendations – in-person at NET Office

- **November 6th** – Board Meeting – Public Hearing & Full Board Decisions on Eligibility
- **November 10th** – Grants Committee Scoring Begins
- **November 26th** – Scoring submissions are due into the NET Grants Portal – *NET staff will need this additional time to process the scoring results*
- **December 11th** at 1:30 pm – Grants Committee Meeting – Grant Applications Scoring & Recommendations for Funding – in-person at the NET Office
- **January 8th** – Board Meeting – Public Hearing & Full Board Decisions on Grant Awards

5. Review Eligibility questions and criteria

Executive Director Adams discussed eligibility criteria and noted that further information on rules and regulations can be found on the NET website and the NET Grants Portal. It was noted that the numbers at the end of each eligibility question indicate the correlative location, either in state statute or in Title 137.

Christen inquired about eligibility requirements regarding regulatory actions, specifically in the case of invasive weed control by Weed Management Areas . Discussion centered around the enforcement of such actions and whether applicants who were required by law to undertake these actions should be deemed ineligible (e.g., enforced/regulatory actions are ineligible for funding).

6. Grants Portal Demonstration

Executive Director Adams demonstrated the NET Grants Portal, requested that Board Members recuse themselves if there are grants for which they have conflicts of interest, and noted that scoring will be completed in the NET Grants Portal by the Grants Committee after eligibility has been determined by the NET Board on November 6, 2025.

7. Next Meeting

The next Grants Committee meeting will be held October 16, 2025, at 2077 N Street, Suite 310, Lincoln, NE at 1:30 pm.

8. Adjourn

Committee Chairman Coleman adjourned the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

Holly Adams, Executive Director

Grants Committee NET Agenda Materials

Agenda Item 4

Object: To make determinations of eligibility of NET grant applications

Contact Person: Holly Adams

For: ACTION

Attachments: 14 Pages

BACKGROUND

Nebraska Environmental Trust Act from Nebraska Revised Statutes §81-15,167 to 81-15,176.
Nebraska Environmental Trust Board Rules and Regulations Title 137.

Nebraska Environmental Policy Section V: Grant Applications

EXPLANATION

The Grants Committee receives an application after the Executive Director has reviewed it for completeness. A technical review is made, if necessary, and provided to the Grants Committee members in the Grants Portal. The Executive Director makes an eligibility recommendation to the Grants Committee. The Grants Committee makes a determination of eligibility and recommendation to the full NET Board for consideration.

After the Grants Committee makes their recommendations to the NET Board for consideration, the NET Board may adopt or revise the Grant Committee determination for eligibility. If the NET Board determines an applicant is eligible, it would then be scored by the Grants Committee. An application must be eligible before it is considered for scoring.

PROPOSAL

The Grants Committee received the grant applications, eligibility criteria and supporting documentation. The Grants Committee members had an opportunity to independently review the applications. The Executive Director has provided recommendations of grants that are not eligible and the basis for those recommendations.

Recommended motion eligible: "I move to determine that grant applications (each listed) are eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and approval." Note: there may be potential abstentions due to potential conflicts of interest.

Recommended motion not eligible: "I move to determine that grant applications (each listed) are not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation." Note: there may be potential abstentions due to potential conflicts of interest.

2026 List of Applications

| App ID | Project Sponsor | Project Name |
|---------------|---|---|
| 26-101 | ROAM Share (dba Heartland Bike Share) | The Free Rides Project |
| 26-102 | Southwest Weed Management | 2026 - 2027 Western Republican River Basin Riparian Habitat Project |
| 26-103 | Grand Island Area Clean Community System | Operation of Regional Household Hazardous Waste Facility |
| 26-104 | Terrabyte, LLC | Canapi: Turning Nebraska Business into Habitat Restoration |
| 26-105 | Metropolitan Utilities District | Used Oil Filter Recycling Project |
| 26-106 | Village of Orleans | Village of Orleans STARR Community Improvement |
| 26-107 | Lewis & Clark Natural Resources District | Smart Water Solutions - Water Resources Technology & Conservation |
| 26-108 | Nebraska Game and Parks Commission | Niobrara Lake Improvement Project |
| 26-109 | Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska | Hastings CSS Waste Reduction and Warehouse Project |
| 26-110 | Pine Lake Association | Watershed work and Lake excavation |
| 26-111 | Aster Scatter | 2025 Client Services |
| 26-112 | Pheasants Forever, Inc. | Pathway For Wildlife, Ranchers, Farmers, and Communities |
| 26-113 | Pheasants Forever, Inc. | Habitat Share Program |
| 26-114 | Quail Forever | Mobile Prescribed Burn Equipment, Trainings, and Outreach |
| 26-115 | Trailblazer Resource Conservation & Development Council | Electronics Recycling Events |
| 26-116 | Northeast Nebraska Resource Conservation & Development | Early Detection and Integrated Management of Invasive Plants |
| 26-117 | Lauritzen Gardens | From Waste to Wonder: Water Detention & Habitat Restoration at the Oasis, Lauritzen Gardens |
| 26-118 | FarWide Conservation Trust, Inc. | Mill Pond Restoration Feasibility Study |
| 26-119 | Lower Platte North NRD | Source Water Monitoring Project |
| 26-120 | Nebraska Game and Parks Commission | Enhancing prairie and woodland in the Niobrara River Valley |
| 26-121 | Middle Niobrara Natural Resources District | MNNRD Educational Complex |
| 26-122 | Southeast Weed Management Area | Preserving Diverse and Resilient Grasslands in Southeast Nebraska Through Sericea Lespedeza Control |
| 26-123 | Nolan Lemna | Sustainable Sustenance: Environmentally impactful, community driven |

2026 List of Applications

| App ID | Project Sponsor | Project Name |
|---------------|---|--|
| 26-124 | Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska - Environmental Protection Department | Advancing the Winnebago Watershed-Based Plan: Phase 2 (Kelly Pond), Enhanced Monitoring Capacity and Data Collection |
| 26-125 | Lower Platte North Natural Resources District | No-Till Grass Drill 2026 |
| 26-126 | Nebraska Game and Parks Commission | Rainwater Basin Wetland Management |
| 26-127 | Christopher Costello | Copy of Green Energy Water Parks, USA |
| 26-128 | Village of Leigh | Park Waterway Deepening and Clean Up |
| 26-129 | Four Corners Health Department | Household Hazardous Waste Collection |
| 26-130 | Platte Valley Weed Management Area | Invasive Plant Species Control Along the Central Platte River |
| 26-131 | Pheasants Forever, Inc. | Community Based Approach to Increasing Public Access on Private Lands |
| 26-132 | MVR LLC | Island Oasis Rain Garden |
| 26-133 | SID 162 Millard Park | Bank Stabilization Phase II |
| 26-134 | Nebraska Community Foundation For Business of Rainwater Basin Joint Venture | Happy Cows; Happy Wetlands III |
| 26-135 | People's City Mission | Help Center Forklift Upgrade |
| 26-136 | The Nature Conservancy | Prescribed Fire Training Exchange 2026 |
| 26-137 | Gretna Sanitation, Inc. | Eastern Nebraska CNG Refuse Truck Project |
| 26-138 | Audubon Great Plains | South Platte River Trail Prairie Enhancement |
| 26-139 | Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation | Community Habitat Kits to Support Pollinators |
| 26-140 | Rebecca Ravenkamp | Using Livestock Technology for Resource Conservation |
| 26-141 | Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment | Lower Elkhorn and North Fork Elkhorn Floodplain Mapping |
| 26-142 | Lower Platte North Natural Resources District | Shell Creek Enhancement Plan: 2026-2028 |
| 26-143 | Two Rivers Public Health Department | Nuisance to Nature Program |
| 26-144 | FarWide Conservation Trust, Inc. | City of Imperial Stormwater Feasibility Study |
| 26-145 | Nebraska Game and Parks Commission | Statewide Grassland Initiative |
| 26-146 | Nebraska Recycling Council | Recycling Equipment Grants |
| 26-147 | Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District | Observing Water and Nutrient Mobility in the Vadose Zone |
| 26-148 | Nebraska Statewide Arboretum | Greener Towns |
| 26-149 | Lower Platte Weed Management Area | Lower Platte River & Tributaries - Water Conveyance and Habitat Improvement Project |
| 26-150 | Keep Omaha Beautiful | Trees for Tomorrow: Expanding and Understanding Omaha's Urban Canopy |

2026 List of Applications

| App ID | Project Sponsor | Project Name |
|---------------|---|--|
| 26-151 | Nebraska Community Foundation For Business of Rainwater Basin Joint Venture | Rainwater Basin Watershed Restoration and Assessment Project |
| 26-152 | Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition | Nebraska Grazing Lands enhancing advocacy for rangelands and tribal lands in Nebraska |
| 26-153 | Keep Nebraska Beautiful | Keep Nebraska Beautiful Used Oil Collection Program (2026 - 2027 Application) |
| 26-154 | Twin Valley Weed Management Area | Eastern Republican and Little Blue Watershed Improvement Project |
| 26-155 | Lincoln/Lancaster County Habitat for Humanity, inc | Lincoln Habitat Building Materials Reclamation Project |
| 26-156 | Ducks Unlimited, Inc. | PRBE Perkins Wetland Restoration |
| 26-157 | Nebraska Community Foundation for Business of Rainwater Basin Joint Venture | Growing and Expanding Nebraska's Core Grasslands |
| 26-158 | Keep Chadron Beautiful | Dawes County Recycling Expansion and Education Project |
| 26-159 | Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department | Increasing Awareness and Testing around Private Well Water Quality and Mitigating Health Risks From Water Contaminants |
| 26-160 | Lower Platte South Natural Resources District | Pecan Creek Wetland Complex |
| 26-161 | Frenchman-Cambridge Irrigation District | Frenchman-Cambridge Irrigation District Meter Upgrades and Water Efficiency Project |
| 26-162 | Nebraska Community Foundation for benefit of Rainwater Basin Joint Venture | Grassland Enhancement at Harlan County Reservoir |
| 26-163 | Traudt Enterprises, Inc. | Variable Rate Manure Spreader |
| 26-164 | Lindsay Academy | Seeds of Tomorrow |
| 26-165 | Sandhills Weed Management Area | Sandhills WMA Invasive Species Management, Biocontrol and Education II |
| 26-166 | Conservation Nebraska | Common Ground |
| 26-167 | Sandhills Task Force | Sandhills Ecosystem Stewardship Project: Improving Habitat and Resiliency |
| 26-168 | Treaven Scheideler | Sandhills Biochar |
| 26-169 | Nebraska Agriculture in the Classroom, a program of Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation | Agriculture and the Environment, Education and Outreach |
| 26-170 | Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust, Inc. | Riverine Wetland Management to Benefit Nebraska Species of Concern |
| 26-171 | The Nature Conservancy | Healthy Habitat on the Niobrara River |
| 26-172 | Nebraska Game and Parks Commission on behalf of Nebraska Grassland Alliance | Grasslands for Generations: Shared Stories for a Shared Future |

2026 List of Applications

| App ID | Project Sponsor | Project Name |
|--------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 26-173 | Ducks Unlimited, Inc. | Memphis Lake Renovation |

Recommend Not Eligible

| App ID | Project Sponsor | Project Name | Notes |
|--------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 26-127 | Christopher Costello | Green Energy Water Parks, USA | Did not effectively address eligibility questions |

Eligibility - Discussion

| App ID | Project Sponsor | Project Name | Notes |
|--------|---|--|-----------------------------|
| 26-104 | Terrabyte, LLC | Canapi: Turning Nebraska Business into Habitat Restoration | Primarily private in nature |
| 26-105 | Metropolitan Utilities District | Used Oil Filter Recycling Project | Possibly Regulatory |
| 26-141 | Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment | Lower Elkhorn and North Fork Elkhorn Floodplain Mapping | Possibly Regulatory |
| 26-163 | Traudt Enterprises, Inc. | Variable Rate Manure Spreader | Primarily private in nature |
| 26-168 | Treaven Scheideler | Sandhills Biochar | Primarily private in nature |

Recommend Not Eligible

App. ID: 26-127

Sponsor: Christopher Costello

Project Title: Green Energy Water Parks, USA

Project Summary

What the project needs more than funding is advice, direction, and connections to see this project grow up and down every major waterway be it creek or river valley working to clean the 'Big Blue' from the inside out before trash islands gets the utmost attention!?

personally, it is my hope that the Nebraska Environmental Trust is there every step of the way extending a lending hand in many aspects surrounding this project outside of funding!?

G.E.W.P., "Project Sponsor" is embedded within G.E.W.P.'s motto, "Bond, Build, & Boogie On!?" Mankind is built to build and G.E.W.P. is a compliment to Modern Society in an unfolding piece of intelligent design that has taken root in center pivot irrigation farming to G.E.W.P. development in solving the depleting Ogallala Aquifer, reduce nitrate levels in our water tables, capture hydrogen carbons to be transformed into simple burnable methane gas or recycled plastic tubing gear, further expand grid capacity by alternative energy source via sideways hydroelectric turbine to provide aquatic recreation and expanding desirable jobs and new markets worthy of investment!?

Eligibility

Responses to the eligibility criteria's questions lacked clarity and coherence. They did not effectively address the questions.

Recommended motion: I move to determine that grant application 26-127 is not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.

Eligibility – Discussion

App. ID: 26-104

Sponsor: Terrabyte, LLC

Project Title: Canapi: Turning Nebraska Business into Habitat Restoration

Project Summary

Canapi is an in-development software platform that enables Nebraska businesses to automatically fund local habitat restoration projects and waste recycling projects...

In Year 1, Terrabyte is seeking NET funding to build the first operational version (minimum viable product, MVP) of Canapi, including: - Integration with Square point-of-sale systems –

An admin dashboard for invoicing, billing, and reporting - Partnership development with Nebraska-based environmental organizations and local businesses by lowering the barriers to automated environmental contributions, Canapi will create a scalable system that funnels business activity into ongoing habitat restoration and conservation initiatives across the state.

Eligibility

Question: Will your project pay for private benefits or provide assistance to projects or portions of projects whose benefits are primarily private in nature? Compensation for contributions made to a project, such as land or land rights, shall not constitute payment for private benefits. (04.005)

Answer: Yes, Approx. 3% (\$18,000) of our budget is for producer stipends to complete work for the public good. If this does not meet NET requirements then please contact us. We will address it through the SHC cash contribution in the “personnel” category and other means. Private benefits infers that a producer alone will benefit. Our model engages producers to share economic and environmental information that will be aggregated to inform the overall state and advance NET priorities. Producers will be expected to complete work and meet agreements to publicly share–no exceptions. They will serve as mentors, presenters, and share knowledge on the adoption of regenerative ag practices. The SHC proposal is a “win-win” based upon a national best practice analysis, i.e., the Soil Health Institute. We intend to reach several hundred producers and landowners in the targeted area thus a rippling effect on others. We will work with progressive producers and local, SVG leaders to ensure success.

Recommended motion: I move to determine that grant application 26-104 is/is not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.

App. ID: 26-105

Sponsor: Metropolitan Utilities District

Project Title: Used Oil Filter Recycling Project

Project Summary

Metropolitan Utility Districts requests funds to purchase a 25-ton high speed oil filter crusher designed to reduce hazardous waste by crushing the District's used oil filters. The current process is to gravity drain the filters overnight, but crushing is the most effective method for properly and reliably draining oil from the filters...

Eligibility

Question: Does your project implement actions mandated by regulations, excluding remediation? (04.001.01)

Answer: No, this project is not implementing an action that is specifically mandated by regulation; however, it directly supports the intent of state and federal environmental programs by exceeding minimum requirements. By improving the management of used oil and oil filters, the project advances best practices in hazardous waste reduction, resource recovery, and pollution prevention, ensuring ongoing compliance and strengthening the District's sustainability efforts.

Regulations: Title 128, Chapter 2, 009 states that to not consider used oil filters as hazardous waste, which requires special disposal, they are required to drain them. Hot draining and crushing are listed as one of the accepted methods under this regulation.

Title 128, Chapter 2: DEFINITION OF SOLID WASTE AND HAZARDOUS WASTE. 009. The following solid wastes are not hazardous wastes: 009.12. Non-terne plated used oil filters that are not mixed with wastes listed in Chapter 3, 011 through 016 if these filters have been gravity hot-drained using one of the following methods: 009.12B Hot-draining and crushing.

Recommended motion: I move to determine that grant application 26-105 is/is not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.

App. ID: 26-141

Sponsor: Nebr. Dept. of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE)

Project Title: Lower Elkhorn and North Fork Elkhorn Floodplain Mapping

Project Summary

The Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE) typically receives federal funding to complete floodplain mapping. Due to a likely reduction in federal funds in FY25, DWEE is applying for NET funding to complete hydrologic and hydraulic analyses and delineation of floodplain boundaries for the North Fork Elkhorn and Lower Elkhorn HUC8 watersheds. The project will result in updated flood hazard data for portions of Antelope, Knox, Pierce, Wayne, Madison, Stanton, Cuming, Platte, Colfax, Dodge, Burt, and Washington Counties. These watersheds need updated flood data, with an average published map age of nearly 19 years, in which time both watersheds have experienced historic flooding. In addition, Antelope, Pierce, and Cuming Counties still have paper maps which are difficult for communities to use while making floodplain management decisions. With floodplain boundaries that accurately represent present conditions, community officials can make educated decisions on where development should occur, while reserving floodplain areas for wetlands and habitats for plant, fish, and wildlife species in the region. The attached NGPC Conservation and Environmental Review Tool report highlights the USGS protected areas, natural communities, and at-risk species within the project area that could benefit from limiting development in the floodplains identified through this project.

Eligibility

Question: Does your project provide direct assistance to regulatory programs?

(04.001.01)

Answer: No. The proposed project will not result in updated regulatory data and will only be used by communities that choose to use the project results as best available data.

Question: Does your project implement actions mandated by regulations, excluding remediation? (04.001.01)

Answer: No. The proposed project will not result in updated regulatory data and will only be used by communities that choose to use the project results as best available data.

Regulations:

- **Nebraska Revised Statute 31-1017 - Department; flood plain management; powers and duties.**
 - (4) Provide local governments having jurisdiction over flood-prone lands with technical data and maps adequate to develop or support reasonable flood plain management regulation;
 - (5) Adopt and promulgate rules and regulations establishing minimum standards for local flood plain management regulation...

- **Nebraska Revised Statute 31-1018. Preparation of flood hazard data and maps; department; duties; considerations.**

In determining areas of the state for which state-prepared flood hazard data and maps are needed by local governments or by state or federal agencies and the order in which such data and maps are to be prepared, the department shall consider the following factors in such areas:

- (1) Potential for future development;
- (2) Potential for flood damage or loss of life;
- (3) Probability that adequate data and maps will be prepared within a reasonable time by other sources;
- (4) Availability and adequacy of any existing maps;
- (5) Availability of flood data and other information necessary to produce adequate maps; and
- (6) Degree of interest shown by the local governments in the area in utilizing flood data and maps in an effective flood plain management program.

Flood area data and maps produced by the department may be provided either directly to the local government which has jurisdiction over such area or indirectly through the national flood insurance program if the department and the federal agency responsible for administering the national flood insurance program agree to such an arrangement. **Such maps shall delineate the flood plain of the base flood and, when information is available, the floodway and flood fringe of such flood plain.** Such maps shall also contain or be accompanied by such other information as the department deems appropriate.

Recommended motion: I move to determine that grant application 26-141 is/is not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.

App. ID: 26-163

Sponsor: Traudt Enterprises, Inc.

Project Title: Variable Rate Manure Spreader

Project Summary

We are looking at upgrading our manure spreader, 6-row 1998 Balzer 8000, to a 2025-2026 GEA ProManure 7300. Our current manure spreader is controlled manually to adjust the flow rate. The new GEA ProManure 7300 is an 8-row machine with a flow meter that is able to variable rate the manure over the field based on manure and soil samples. We hope to go from 40-acre soil samples down to 1-acre grid samples. The overall outcome by being able to variable rate manure on our acres and or our customers acres, is to comply with UNL's 4R's. The 4R's, as stated by Javed Iqbal - Extension Nutrient Management and Water Quality Specialist, is a nutrient management and water stewardship approach that emphasizes fertilizer use with the right source, right rate, right time and right placement. This science-based approach focuses on the best nutrient management practices and sustainable crop production with increasing crop yield and farmer's profit while protecting the environment.

Eligibility

Question: Will your project pay for private benefits or provide assistance to projects or portions of projects whose benefits are primarily private in nature? (04.005)

Answer: Yes, my project is private, but the results of my project are environmentally positive. We farm four miles from the Meat Animal Research Center (MARC). MARC has a swine facility, and with this type of manure spreader that has a flow meter, it opens the door for us to work with them to apply their manure on their tillable acres, as well as ours and other customers. The manure spreader/project that I am applying for will help soils, water filtration, water holding capacity, and air quality. It, also, opens the door to other potential customers since we'll have the ability to variable rate manure based off of soil and manure samples.

Recommended motion: I move to determine that grant application 26-163 is/is not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.

App. ID: 26-168

Sponsor: Treaven Scheideler

Project Title: Sandhills Biochar

Project Summary

Eastern Red Cedar trees are a never-ending battle on Nebraska rangelands. This project aims to minimize the issue by turning this invasive wood into biochar—a powerful soil enhancer that not only improves soil health but also sequesters carbon from the atmosphere. Biochar will be used in regenerative farming practices, supporting more sustainable food systems.

Production will take place onsite using a mobile kiln system, which reduces transportation costs and allows us to target heavily infested areas across Nebraska. I am seeking funding assistance to purchase the mobile biochar machine known as the CharBoss, developed by Air Burners Inc. Once funded, the project will become self-sustaining, with the capacity to scale and make a meaningful impact across the state. This science-based, scalable approach to cedar tree removal will benefit not only Nebraska’s cattle producers, but also crop growers, rural communities, and the environment—paving the way for a brighter, more resilient future for Nebraska.

Eligibility

Questions: Will your project pay for private benefits or provide assistance to projects or portions of projects whose benefits are primarily private in nature? (04.005)

Answer: No, this project will not pay for private benefits or support initiatives whose primary outcome is private in Nature. Sandhills Biochar is designed to deliver broad public and ecological benefits, such as restoring Nebraska Rangelands, improving soil health, reducing wildfire risk, and enhancing climate resilience.

Recommended motion: I move to determine that grant application 26-168 is/is not eligible and forward to the NET Board for review and affirmation.

Eligibility: Private Gain

Benefits from a Nebraska Environmental Trust Grant must be public in nature. Private benefit, especially private financial gain, must be incidental to the project. This may create a special challenge for private landholders seeking to improve their property or for for-profit enterprises seeking assistance for their operations. The following list is provided as an illustration of some, though not all, possible options that may demonstrate predominant public benefit of a project.

An applicant could incorporate any or all of the following components into a proposal in order to demonstrate that a project results in public gain:

1. The project is co-sponsored by at least one public entity in full partnership. The entity will determine appropriate public benefit as a pre-condition to partnership.
2. Incidental private gain, e.g. increased equity value, reverts to the public sector.
3. The project returns a benefit value to the public exceeding the dollar amount of the grant, and the grant represents the minimum investment required in order to produce the projected benefits to the public; and there is clear public need that is unmet and the private sector is unlikely to meet this need without public assistance.

An applicant could incorporate the following into a proposal to help determine that a project results in public gain when seeking funds for the improvement of private property:

1. The increase in ecosystem value can be quantified; e.g., tons of soil conserved, volume of water with measures of clarity, purity, etc.
2. The increase in value of private property is quantified; and the increase in ecosystem value clearly exceeds the increase in the value of private property; and the grant represents the minimum investment required in order to produce the projected benefits to the public.
3. A private property owner might enter into an agreement granting equity interest, a conservation easement, or like arrangement with a public entity to demonstrate how the private gain is to be repaid.

The burden of proof of any of these conditions lies with the applicant.

Proposed Date: 12/13/1994

Adopted Date: 02/07/1995

Internal Procedural Guidance for the Evaluation of Applications Regarding Prohibition of Directly Funding Regulatory Programs or Funding Actions Mandated by Regulations.

Method To Used To Determine Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-15,176(2)(a) Eligibility:

To make a determination as to whether an application would directly fund a regulatory program or fund an action mandated by regulations, staff and board members shall utilize the following decision tree to evaluate an application:

1. Is the grant providing direct assistance to a regulatory program?
 - a. Is the applicant a governmental entity? (If yes, proceed to b. If no, the grant does not provide direct assistance to a regulatory program, skip to 2.)
 - b. Is the program being funded regulatory in nature? (If yes, proceed to c. If no, the grant does not provide direct assistance to a regulatory program, skip to 2.)
 - i. Regulatory means to control, direct, or govern. Generally this means statutes, rules, regulations, or ordinances that direct or require some other entity or person to do something. (Definition from Title 137).
 - c. Is the applicant being funded the one in control of the program? (If yes, funding is prohibited. If no, the grant does not provide direct assistance to a regulatory program, skip to 2.)
2. Is the grant funding the implementation of actions mandated by regulations?
 - a. Is the grant funding an activity the applicant is required to do? (If yes, proceed to b. If no, grant is permissible.)
 - b. Is the requirement in regulation? (If yes, proceed to c. If no, grant is permissible.)
 - i. Note: regulations means only those rules codified in the Nebraska Administrative Code or the Code of Federal Regulations. (Definition from Title 137).
 - c. Is the grant for remediation? (If yes, grant is permissible. If no, grant is funding the implementation of actions mandated by regulations and is not permissible.)

If it is determined that an application fails either Question 1 or Question 2 above, it is not eligible for funding.

Grants Portal Demonstration

Agenda Item 5

Object: How to utilize the grants portal for Scoring

Contact Person: Holly Adams

For: Discussion

Attachments: 2 pages

BACKGROUND

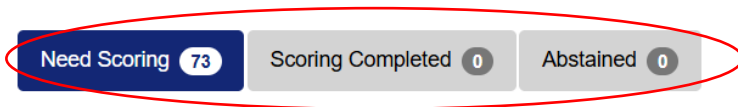
Login page: <https://environmentaltrustgrants.org/>




EXPLANATION

Grant applications are submitted by applicants through the NET grants portal. The Grants Committee utilizes the Grants Portal to review applications and make scoring determinations.

How to Review Projects for Eligibility

1. Login to Grants Portal at the following link: <https://environmentaltrustgrants.org/>
2. You will see the following screen when logged in:



| Manage | App ID | Project Sponsor | Project Name | Review Group | Amount Requested | Term of Request |
|---|--------|--|---|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
|  | 26-101 | ROAM Share (dba Heartland Bike Share) | The Free Rides Project | Air Quality | \$240,000 | 3 |
|  | 26-102 | Southwest Weed Management | 2026 - 2027 Western Republican River Basin Riparian Habitat Project | Water | \$186,960 | 1 |
|  | 26-103 | Grand Island Area Clean Community System | Operation of Regional Household Hazardous Waste Facility | Waste Management | \$360,478 | 2 |

3. The top menu shows the number of projects you need to score, how many have been submitted, and how many you've abstained from. **Note:** Only projects deemed eligible by the full NET Board will be listed here.
4. To open a project for review, click on the pencil icon under the manage column. This will open the application.
5. The following are the available tabs for review in the applications.



- Cover Sheet** – Grant Application Summary and Narratives
- Budget** – Proposed dollar amounts for application, including grant funds and cash match
- Real Estate** – If there is any proposed purchase of real estate or real estate improvements, the property information is listed here.
- Timeline** – The applicants proposed project timeline if awarded

- e. **Requirements** – This also lists their responses to the eligibility and scoring criteria questions
- f. **Attachments** – The applicant’s attachments. Sometimes there’s supplemental information provided.
- g. **Technical Review** – If a technical review was requested, the reviewers responses are here
- h. **Recommendation** – This is the recommendation for award information. This will not be completed until after the project has been decided
- i. **Eligibility** - The applicant’s responses to the eligibility criteria questions with the relevant rules and regulations.
- j. **My Score** – This is where you can review the scoring criteria questions, the grantees responses, rules and regulations, and where the score for each criteria question is entered.

6. **My Scoring Tab.** This is where you will enter your score. You will need to click on the Enter My Score icon. Here you will select your score from the dropdown menu. Once completed, click the save and then submit icon at either the top or bottom of the page. **Note:** You can also click the save icon and come back to your scoring later.

Back
Save
Submit

| | Criteria | Applicants Response | |
|----|---|--|---|
| 1. | Does your project conform to the funding categories? Explain which categories and how. (04.001.03, 04.004, and 81.15.176) | Yes. HBS's "The Free Rides Project" contributes measurable impact toward NET's commitment to Air Quality projects in Nebraska. HBS directly replace carbon-intensive trips (i.e. those completed by personal motor vehicles, rideshare, taxi, etc.) with trips on low /zero emission bike share. This directly | <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;"> <p>Enter Review</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- See Guidance - ▾</p> </div> |